

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 28

By DeBerry L

A RESOLUTION to recognize Sara L. Lewis on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who in their years of work have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm and have distinguished themselves, through their extraordinary efforts, as dedicated professionals and exemplary community leaders; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable person is Sara L. Lewis, who has devotedly served her beloved hometown of Memphis in the field of education in numerous capacities for over forty-five years. She recently announced her retirement from public service after having completed her fourth term on the Memphis City Schools Board of Education, which she served as its President; and

WHEREAS, while Mrs. Lewis's presence on the Board of Education for Memphis City Schools will be deeply missed, she has left behind an indelible legacy of service to public education, as evidenced by her strong belief that as public schools go, so goes America; and

WHEREAS, a proud product of the Memphis City Schools, Sara Lewis is a graduate of LeMoyne Owen College in Memphis. She earned her Master of Education degree in Elementary Education from Memphis State University in 1972, and has completed post graduate work in Education Administration and Supervision at the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, beginning her career in the classroom, Mrs. Lewis has worked as a regular teacher, a curriculum developer, and as a Title I Project Director and area specialist; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, Sara L. Lewis was named Principal of Lauderdale Elementary School, where she admirably served until 1983, when she was named Assistant Superintendent, Department of Curriculum and Instruction for Memphis City Schools, a post she held until retiring from the school system in 1990; and

WHEREAS, continuing her commitment to public education and to the children of Memphis, Sara L. Lewis was elected to the Memphis City Schools Board of Education in 1991, becoming the first African-American to be elected to an At-Large position; and

WHEREAS, always an advocate for children, Mrs. Lewis served as Executive Director for Free the Children, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to fighting poverty, from 1990 to 1998, and from 1998 to 2000 she served as Executive Director of Shelby County Head Start, Inc., overseeing a program that served over 2,000 children in Memphis and Shelby County; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Lewis's dedication to Memphis and Shelby County is also evidenced by her service over the years on numerous boards and commissions, including the United Way of Greater Memphis, Family Service, the Children's Service Agency, the Private Industry Council, and former Vice President Al Gore's Family Reunion Steering Committee; and

WHEREAS, illustrating an admirable spirit of selflessness, Sara Lewis's extensive list of community activities also includes service as a board member for Memphis in May, Leadership Memphis, Memphis Community Singers, Inc., Memphis Museum Systems, and the Community Health Agency, to name a few; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Sara L. Lewis has received a cornucopia of prestigious honors, including the Friend of Education Award from the Memphis Education Association, the Susan B. Anthony Award from the Tennessee Education Association, the Alumni of the Year Award and the Curriculum Leadership Award from the University of Memphis, the Guardian Angel Award from the Tennessee Black Heritage Celebration, and the Fire Police Chief in Hurt Village Award from the women in a public housing development project that she helped to reclaim their homes and families from the drug and crime lords who had previously controlled it; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Lewis exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; her devotion to her peerless career in education, her outstanding public service, and her contributions as a community leader, merit recognition and praise; and

WHEREAS, throughout her estimable career, Sara Lewis has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of her colleagues and fellow citizens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we extend to Sara L. Lewis our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in her future endeavors, and we thank her for her unwavering dedication and substantial contributions as an educator and public servant for the people of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.